

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3354

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

RUDKKRQ/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 279

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

USCINCUSAFE FOR POLAD

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7301

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, SP

SUBJ: CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS SUFFER AS A RESULT OF THE CURRENT

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POLITICAL CLIMATE

SUMMARY: CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS ARE AT A LOW POINT, ACCORDING TO A WELL-PLACED CHURCH SOURCE, BECAUSE OF THE POPE'S HARSH CRITICISM OF THE EXECUTIONS AND A MADRID AUXILIARY BISHOP'S BROADSIDE AGAINST THE EXECUTIONS AND GOS REPRESSION IN GENERAL. FRANCO'S LETTER TO THE POPE IN EXPLANATION AND ASKING PARDON HAS "MOVED" THE POPE BUT THE NUNCIO HERE REPORTEDLY VIEWS THE LETTER WITH SOME SKEPTICISM. THE CHURCH, LIKE ALL MODERATE FORCES, HAS BEEN SQUEEZED BY THE RECENT POLARIZATION. END SUMMARY

1. THE POPE'S HARSH CRITICISM IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE EXECUTIONS HAS BROUGHT CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS TO THEIR LOWEST POINT EVER, ACCORDING TO A POLITICALLY ASTITUTE, LIBERAL CHURCH SOURCE. CARDINAL TARANCON HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE POPE'S REMARKS, WHICH OUR SOURCE THINKS MAY HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY THE POPE HIMSELF. THE CARDINAL WOULD HAVE COUNSELED A MORE MODERATE EXPRESEION BY THE POPE, THOUGH THE CARDINAL ALSO OPPOSED THE EXECUTIONS.

2. THE EXISTENCE -- BUT NOT THE CONTENTS -- OF A SUBSEQUENT LETTER TO THE POPE FROM FRANCO HAS HIT THE PRESS. OUR SOURCE TOLD US THAT LETTER ASKED TOE POPE'S PARDON AND SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN WHY THE EXECUTIONS WERE NECESSARY. THE POPE WAS REPORTEDLY MOVED BY THE LETTER, BUT THE SOMEWHAT MORE ZRRLDLY NUNCIO HAS TOLD OUR SOURCE HE JUDGED FRANCO'S LETTER TO BE A DIPLOMATIC EXERCISE.

3. THE AFFAIR OF MSGR. INIESTA, AN AUXILIARY BISHOP CHARGED WITH THE CITY'S POOREST SUBURB, THE WORKING CLASS DISTRICT OF VALLECAS, HAS ADDED A FURTHER STRAIN. INIESTA'S HOMILY, READ OCTOBER 4 IN SOME 60 CHURCHES IN HIS CICARIATE, CONDEMNED TERRORISM AND EXPRESSED SORROW FOR ITS VICTIMS, BUT THE GOS BORE THE BRUNT OF INIESTA'S SERMON. USING WELL-CHOSEN SCRIPTURAL QUOTES, HE CRITICIZED THE EXECUTIONS, THE LACK OF DUE PROCESS, AND CONDEMNED THE METHODS USED TO EXTRACT CONFESSIONS FROM SOME ACCUSED TERRORISTS. THAT DAY THE POLICE ARRESTED THE THREE PRIESTS WHO SHARED A HOUSE WITH INIESTA, AND LATER ANOTHER SEVEN. ALL NIGHT LONG INIESTA
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RECEIVED THREATENING PHONE CALLS. THE NEXT MORNING COL. QUINTERO (CHIEF OF THE SPANISH SECURITY SERVICES, DGS), TOLD MSGR. PATINO, CARDINAL TARANCON'S CHIEF ADVISOR, THAT HE COULD NOT GUARANTEE INIESTA'S SECURITY.

4. CARDINAL TARANCON HAS FOUND THAT A COOLING OFF PERIOD OFTEN SUITS THE SPANISH TEMPERAMENT AND HE AND INIESTA -

SHAKEN BY THE AFFAIR - AGREED THAT INIESTA SHOULD GO TO ROME, OSTENSIBLY FOR A RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE. TARANCON HAS NOW BROUGHT INIESTA HOME, AFTER REFUSING, IN A HEATED INTERVIEW WITH THE JUSTICE MINISTER, THE GOS' REQUEST TO KEEP INIESTA OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD.

5. QUITE APART FROM TARANCON'S REFUSAL TO CAVE INTO THE GOS IS THE EFFECT ON THE CHURCH. TARANCON, WHO WAS IN ROME UNTIL THE DAY OF THE HOMILY, WAS NOT CONSULTED BY INIESTA WHO DISOBEYED AN INSTRUCTION OF TARANCON'S TO HIS AUXILIARIES NOT TO MAKE PRONOUNCEMENTS THAT WOULD EXACERBATE MATTERS. THE CARDINAL FEARS, ABOVE ALL ELSE, A SPLIT AMONG THE FAITHFUL BETWEEN THE PROGRESSIVES AND RADICALS (WHO OFTEN MINISTER TO SPAIN'S DISADVANTAGED) AND THE CONSERVATIVE CLERGY AND LAITY. TARANCON, PRIVATELY ANGRY AT INIESTA'S INDISCRETION, HAS ISSUED A PUBLIC STATEMENT SAYING ONLY THAT THERE IS A TIME TO BE SILENT AND THAT HIS PRIME CONCERN IS TO MAINTAIN THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNION OF THE EPISCOPATE.

6. THIS SUMMARY, FROM A WELL-PLACED AND OBJECTIVE CHURCHMAN, RINGS TRUE. AS HE SAID, RECENT EVENTS HAVE SQUEEZED THE CHURCH, ALONG WITH OTHER MODERATE EVOLUTIONARY FORCES. HE ADDED, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, THAT THE BIGGEST ENEMY OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN, AFTER THE TERRORISTS AND EXTREME RIGHT, HAD BECOME THE EUROPEANS WHO, BY THEIR OVER-REACTION, HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE POLARIZATION. STABLER

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